

Thoreau, Interrupted

Scene 1:

Setting: Gift Shop at Walden Pond, called Shop Deliberately. The cashier is working at the table. The customer is perusing through the gift shop. The cashier looking suspiciously at the customer. Thoreau stumbles in.

Thoreau: (*Stumbles into the gift shop. Looks around*) What is this godforsaken place? Where have I landed?

Cashier: (*Bored tone*) Uhh... Hello? Welcome to "Shop Deliberately"... Your center of all that is "Thoreau"ly enjoyable...

Customer: (*Staring intensely*)

Thoreau: (*Looks at merch*) What is all this rubbish? (*Picks up some merch*) Why has my face been used in this dishonorable way?! Speak you puppet of commerce, why have you ridiculed me so? (*pointing at the cashier*).

Cashier: (*Backs away*) Bro... I just work here. (*Muttering*) I never should have taken this job. (*Back to Thoreau*) You have to calm down or I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

Thoreau: (*Vigorously pointing at cashier*) You low life cannot command me!

Thoreau: (*finds the button that says puppet of commerce*) I just said that... I shall leave myself with dignity, but this disrespect will not be forgotten. I must get back to my cabin, my beans!

Cashier: (*Looks at him weirdly*) ...they're over there... (*points*)

Thoreau: Excuse me? (*looks behind with confusion*)

Customer: (*Grinning ecstatically and legit jumps in*) OMG U HAVE AN AMAZING THOREAU COSPLAY IM SO JEALOUSSSSS!!!

Thoreau: What in tarnation are you speaking of? Cosplay? What is this COSPLAY?!

Customer: Oh, I get it... you are really in character. (*Say in a British accent*) Cosplay my dear man, is a collection of garments which one dons for amusement!

Thoreau: BUT I AM ME "*Ego sum ego!*". Do not reduce me to a mere costume!

Customer: Oh my god, super committed to your role, LOVE that!!

Thoreau: Get out of my way you ignoramus. (*Pushes customers out of the way to go to the beans*).

Cashier: (*To the side*) Hello, is this the police. There is a madman in the store, He's like stealing some stuff... making a mess... chasing away customers. The address? Yeah it's in Walden Pond Village Center, the gift store. Send somebody quickly please.

Thoreau: (*Picks up a can of beans with his face on it*) Who put my face on such a meaningless endeavor? WAS IT YOU! (*holds can in the face of the cashier*)

Cashier: (*Pushes away can, with hand*): Dude, I just work here... and now I'm gonna quit. (*mumble*) This is the third time this week...

Thoreau: Edward, I always knew you had something against me... This is EXACTLY WHY I WANTED TO LIVE DELIBERATELY!!!!

Cashier: My name is Lucas...

Police walk in

Police (Avanti): You're coming with us buddy.

Thoreau: AGAIN? Is this about my taxes? You cannot imprison me for the same crime twice! DUE PROCESS!!

(Police look at each other in confusion)

Police (Liam): Yeah sure... let's go.

Thoreau: *(lots of resistance)* NO! YOU CANNOT DETAIN ME! I HAVE RIGHTS! YOU DIDN'T RECITE MY RIGHTS! NOOOOoooooooo....! *(trials off as taken away)*

Customer: *(As previous action occurs: looks longingly at the merch, then looks around cautiously, before happily going to the shelves and dumping the merch in a comically large duffle bag)*

Scene 2:

Setting: Therapy with the chairs in semi-circle with the therapist and MAMS students already there.

Police: Dr.McCarthy, we have another one...

Therapist: Okay, bring 'em in.

(A second police officer brings in Thoreau. Thoreau is extremely vexed.)

Thoreau: (*grumbling to self*) "Thou clay-brained guts, thou knotty-pated fool, thou whoreson obscene greasy tallow-catch..."

(*Police officers exit and enter as MAMS students, but late.*)

Therapist: Ok guys, let's start today's session. Today we have a new addition (*pointing at the grumbling Thoreau*).

Thoreau: (*crosses arms and taps foot impatiently/nervously while looking slightly off to the side towards the people*)

Therapist: So...

(*Therapist pauses*)

(*Liam runs in interrupting*)

Liam: (*out of breath like he ran there*) Sorry...sorry I'm late.

Therapist: It's okay, please sit down. So for today's lesson...

(*Therapist interrupted second time as second student strolls in*)

Avanti: (*bored*) Hey doc.

Therapist: (*sigh*) Take a seat (*motions with hand*). So how was your summer work?

All Students: (*starts talking at once*)

PAUSE

Thoreau: These barbaric buffoons have not learned the proper etiquette of speaking!

RESUME

Therapist: Okay okay one at a time, Tanay, do you want to go first?

Tanay: I hated how hypocritical he was.

Donya: YEAH EXACTLY!!!! Sorry sorry but he was legit the worst! Half of the book does not even need to be there like- (*exaggerated hand motion*).

Avanti: He couldn't keep one thought consistent for his life. Every two pages he either hated people or loved people, loved people or hated people. And what is his obsession with ants!!!

Liam: And his advice is TERRIBLE! Like, he even says that people should go through the woods with their eyes closed?????

Donya: "It would be worth the while to select our reading" Like we were able to select ours!!! (*sarcastically*)

PAUSE

Thoreau: (*raise an eyebrow*) Sounds a little familiar.

RESUME

Therapist: (*looking at Thoreau*) Anything you want to share?

Thoreau: (*Turns head away as refusal*)

Therapist: Okay... Sounds like nobody likes it. Are there any *good* aspects?

All Students: NO!

Avanti: What is his thing against people just living their lives normally. Like why should he have a problem if a person wants to work or have a family. Not everybody can go and spend their lives in the woods.

Donya: And telling *me* to go live my life?!? LIKE YOUR BOOK WAS PREVENTING ME FROM LIVING MY LIFE!!!

Liam: AND how he treated others! Like, he would keep bringing up “SAVAGES” pretending to “ADORE” them, then goes and belittles them by talking about how great and smart he is! It's disgusting!

Tanay: AND HE WANTED TO EAT A WOODCHUCK, LIKE WHA-

PAUSE

Thoreau: Are they talking about me? No... (*looking uncertainly at the rest of them*) How could they... (*thinks for a while*) have they read my book?!

RESUME

Donya: I mean the ONLY good thing was when the loon absolutely owned him at Walden pond... :) (*Thoreau makes dramatic gesture*)

Thoreau: (*Mouths “WHAT?” in a confused expression*)

Therapist: Ok, I understand that Thoreau was... an interesting writer... but his views should also be appreciated.

PAUSE

Thoreau: The funny man is right! He's the only intelligent one here! Those darn kids have no idea of the true essence of transcendentalism!

RESUME

Avanti: Thoreau is hypocritical and overassertive. I mean, who is HE to tell the US how to live?

(Everyone nods in agreement)

Tanay: Was he hallucinating the entire time?

Donya: Like he had NO reason to go into the woods like it made literally no sense.

Liam: He's just so... ANNOYING, and HYPOCRITICAL, and just overall BORING to read!

Thoreau: *(Stands up dramatically)* NOOOO! YOU'VE HAVE ALL GOT IT WRONG!!!
(hand on head) This is why I left society. You nonsensical people, my ANTS understood it better!! THE RED SQUIRRELS WERE SMARTER THAN YOU ALL!!!!

Thoreau: *(Takes a deep breath/takes a lap/paces)*

Students/Therapists: *(Look at each other in confusion and shock)*

Thoreau: Look, there's many many ways to interpret one's writing. For me, I wanted to show the beauty I found in nature and the wrongs I noticed in society. I understand that you may hate my monologues, but the point of it is to show my stream of thought. I didn't write it to appeal to an audience, rather to share my raw thoughts! Everyone

should live how THEY wish to live, not following some flimsy way of life. LIVE DELIBERATELY! (*Hold up button*) Forge YOUR OWN path!

(As *Thoreau* is finishing his monologue he walks into the distance, behind a tree).

*Students think for a while.

Therapist: (*still confused*) Well that's it for today guys, see you next week?

*Therapist shuffles out of the room.

Student to audience: What was THAT????

Liam: You know what, (*stands up*) he may be crazy, but maybe he's right! All viewpoints deserve to be seen, not ignored because of opinion. (*leaves*)

Avanti: (*stands up*) Maybe I am not so hopeless at school after all! I just need to look at things differently. (*leaves*)

Tanay: (*stands up*) And I think that I should try to gain a different perspective on ideas that everyone contributes. (*leaves*)

Donya: (*stands up*) hm... even if he wasn't Thoreau he did have a poiinnnntt... this could be a good idea for my Walden skit! (*Hurriedly leaves*)